

2009-10 ALUMNI SURVEY A RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Briefs

Research Briefs are short publications prepared by the Departments of Academic Effectiveness and Assessment (AEA) and Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) that are intended to provide relevant information which assists in the performance improvement process used by St. Petersburg College (SPC). Research Brief topics include, but are not limited to, student achievement, state accountability measures, institutional survey results, student enrollment, and faculty/adjunct compensation.

Introduction

SPC annually conducts the Recent Alumni Survey to measure alumni satisfaction with SPC's education programs. The Recent Alumni Survey specifically collected information related to career preparation, preparation for continuing education, and the current employment information and educational status of former students. The data collected is used for the state-required annual Placement and Follow-up Report and as supplemental information to meet continuous improvement initiatives in workforce programs.

Graduates are sent one survey to complete, even in cases where they may have earned multiple degrees within the same year. In these cases, the reported number of surveys sent and responses received are counted once per degree or certificate awarded to the student.

Responses

The Recent Alumni Survey was administered to 4,929 graduates from Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science/Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS), Certificate programs (CT, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. The 2009-10 graduates were first contacted by email and asked to complete an online survey. Those who did not respond to the initial email were sent two additional email reminders at two-week intervals. At the end of the two weeks following the third email contact, a paper copy was mailed, and two weeks later, if no response was received, a second paper copy was mailed for the final contact. One thousand, two hundred and fifty-five surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 25.46%. Table 1 summarizes the response rate by degree or certificate awarded.

Table 1
Respondents by degree or certificate

Degree or Certificate Awarded	Number Graduated	Number Responded	Percent Responded	Percent of Total Responses
BS/BAS	765	210	27.45%	16.73%
AA	2523	588	23.3%	46.85%
AS/AAS	853	284	33.29%	22.63%
CT/ATD/ATC/PSAV/PSVC	788	173	21.95%	13.78%
TOTAL	4,929	1,255	25.46%	100%

This was the sixth year that graduates were initially contacted electronically. The survey of 2009-10 graduates received 576 (45.9%) of the 1,255 responses online. This is a decline from the surveys administered to 2008-09 and 2007-08 graduates, which resulted in 670 (55.7%), and 536 (52.2%), online returns, respectively. However, the overall response rate showed a slight increase of almost one-half percent (0.42%) in 2009-10 over the previous year, as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2
Three year return rate

Graduate Year Surveyed	Number Surveyed	Number Responded	Percent Responded	Number of Online Responses	Percent of Responses Online
2009-10	4,929	1,255	25.46%	576	45.9%
2008-09	4,451	1,202	27.0%	670	55.7%
2007-08	4,045	1,027	25.4%	536	52.2%

Results

Over half of the respondents (52.63%) from all degree and certificate programs reported that continuing their education was the main goal of completing a degree or certificate. "Change career fields" was the second most frequently selected goal among respondents (16.12%). A closer look by program at responses to "The main goal in completing a degree or certificate" finds that the one-half (50.49%) of the bachelor's degree-seeking students selected "Continue my education." The majority of the AA students (73.87%) selected "Continuing my education" while over half of the AS/AAS students (55.35%) selected "Change career fields" or "Continue my education." Over half of the CT, ATC, PSAV, and PSVC students (59.28%) selected "Continue my education" and "Change career fields." Table 3 summarizes this data.

Table 3

Main goal in completing a degree or certificate at SPC by program

What was your main goal in completing a degree or certificate at SPC?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Change career fields	11.27%	6.45%	29.89%	32.93%	16.12%
Continue my education	50.49%	73.87%	25.46%	26.35%	52.63%
Earn more money	7.84%	4.88%	13.65%	5.39%	7.4%
Get a promotion	6.86%	2.26%	3.32%	1.8%	3.21%
Meet certification/training needs	2.45%	1.39%	10.33%	8.98%	4.61%
Obtain employment	14.71%	4.7%	14.39%	14.97%	9.95%
Other	6.37%	6.45%	2.95%	9.58%	6.09%
Total Responses	204	574	271	167	1216

Participants were allowed multiple responses to the question, "Which of the following were you able to accomplish after obtaining your degree or certificate?" "Continue my education" was selected most often (63.72%) as an accomplishment, followed by "Earn more money" which was selected 22.52%; "Obtain Employment," 17.77%; "Meet Certification/Training Needs," 15.64%; and "Change career fields," 14.09%.

A strong majority of respondents (95.36%) indicated that they were satisfied with the help they received from SPC in meeting their goal(s). When asked, "How well did SPC help you meet your above goal", almost half (44.96%) of survey respondents indicated that SPC did "Very well" in helping them meet their goal, and 36.88% indicated "Exceptionally well" as depicted in Table 4.

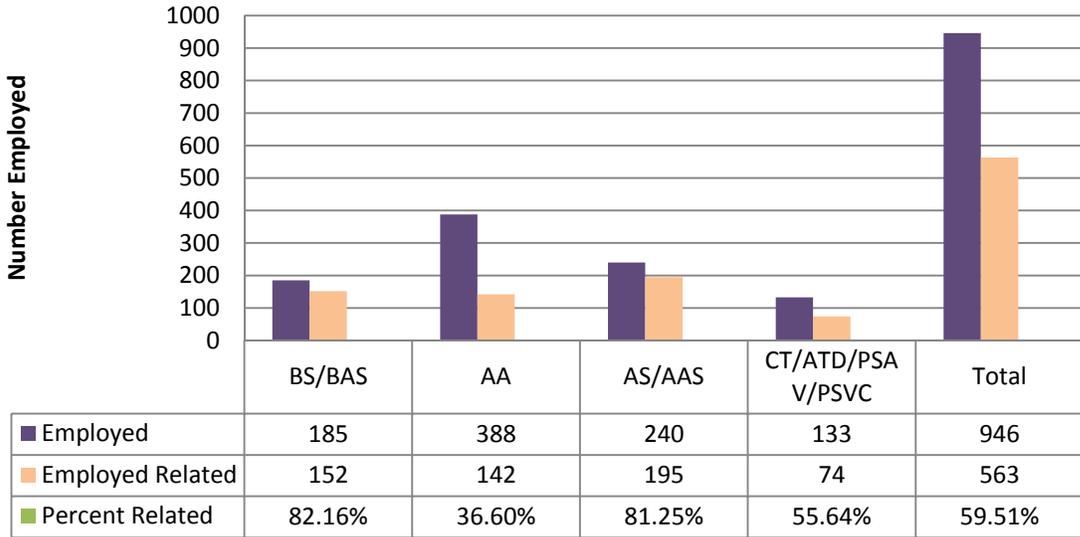
Table 4

Satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded

How well did SPC help you meet your above goal?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	42.79%	37.65%	39.72%	22.54%	36.88%
Very Well	40.87%	46.85%	44.33%	44.51%	44.96%
Adequately	10.58%	12.78%	13.12%	20.23%	13.52%
Poorly	1.92%	1.36%	1.42%	4.62%	1.92%
Not At All	3.85%	1.36%	1.42%	8.09%	2.72%
Total Responses	208	587	282	173	1250

Results from the survey indicated that three-fourths of the respondents (75.86%) were currently employed. Fifty-nine percent (59.51%) of those employed indicated their current position was related to their educational field as shown by Figure 1. The completers of workforce degree programs (BS/BAS, AS/AAS, and Certificate) reported higher field-related employment levels in a range of 55.64% to 82.16% while graduates of the AA program reported (36.60%) field-related employment. Respondents indicated that nineteen were in active military service while ten are in military reserves.

Figure 1
What is your current employment status?



The majority of the 946 employed alumni (98.52%) provided their wage per hour and/or approximate annual equivalent earnings. The average amounts earned by program are varied. Where the most frequently reported hourly wage range of BS/BAS and Certificate students was \$25.00 or more (48.37% and 29.46%, respectively), for AS/AAS students it was \$20.00 - \$24.99 (37.71%), and for AA students it was \$10.00 - \$14.99 (35.25%). Table 5 summarizes wage per hour and annual salary.

Table 5
Hourly wage by degree or certificate awarded

Hourly Wage/ Approximate Annual	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Less than \$10.00 (less than \$21,000)	3.26%	31.33%	3.39%	14.73%	16.42%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 (\$21,000 - \$30,999)	13.04%	35.25%	22.46%	26.36%	26.39%
\$15.00 - \$19.99 (\$31,000 - \$41,999)	21.20%	12.01%	13.98%	13.95%	14.59%
\$20.00 - \$24.99 (\$42,000 - \$51,999)	14.13%	9.40%	37.71%	15.50%	18.35%
\$25.00 or more (\$52,000 or more)	48.37%	12.01%	22.46%	29.46%	24.25%
Total Responses	184	383	236	129	932

In response to the question, "Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?" more than half (64.87%) of the 1,224 alumni responding answered that they were. The vast majority of AA graduates (86.26%), slightly more than one-third (35.75%) of the baccalaureate graduates, and approximately fifty percent of AS/AAS (49.82%) and Certificate (52.07%) are continuing their education. Of those continuing their education, about two-thirds (65.73%) of AA students were enrolled full-time, while almost half of AS/AAS (47.79%), and sixty-one percent (61.36%) of the

certificate students were enrolled part time. Tables 6 and 7 summarize continuing education and enrollment status by awarded SPC degree.

Table 6
Continuing education by degree or certificate awarded

Are you continuing your education at SPC or another college/university?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Continuing Education	35.75%	86.26%	49.82%	52.07%	64.87%
Respondents	207	575	273	169	1224

Table 7
Enrollment status by degree or certificate awarded

Enrollment Status	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Part-time	54.05%	31.05%	47.79%	61.36%	39.42%
Full-time	28.38%	65.73%	42.65%	27.27%	54.03%
Unknown	17.57%	3.23%	9.56%	11.36%	6.55%
Total Continuing Education	74	496	136	88	794

The majority of students (95.26%) reported continuing their education in Florida. More than forty percent (44.43%) of the respondents furthering their education indicated re-enrolling at SPC, and 31.3% reported transferring to the University of South Florida. Students who were continuing their education were also asked if they were enrolled through the University Partnership Center (UPC). Thirty-seven (4.94%) of the 749 respondents indicated that they were enrolled through the UPC. Table 8 presents details of respondents' attendance at various universities and colleges.

Table 8
Institutions where students are continuing their education

Institutions	TOTAL
SPC	44.43%
USF	31.3%
UF	3.51%
UCF	4.27%
FSU	2.9%
Other In-State	8.85%
Out of State	4.73%
Total Responses	655

The graduates continuing their education were asked "How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?" Satisfaction levels were notable with 79.74% of the graduates indicating that their SPC studies prepared them either "very well" or "exceptionally well" for continuing their education. Details of students' satisfaction by degree or certificate awarded are illustrated in Table 9, below.

Table 9
Satisfaction with SPC preparation for continued education by degree or certificate awarded

How well did SPC prepare you for continuing your education?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Exceptionally Well	50.72%	32.44%	28.15%	21.52%	32.21%
Very Well	31.88%	49.69%	48.15%	46.84%	47.53%
Adequately	13.04%	15.81%	20.00%	26.58%	17.40%
Poorly	2.90%	1.64%	2.22%	0.00%	1.69%
Not at all	1.45%	0.41%	1.48%	5.06%	1.17%
Total Responses	69	487	135	79	770

When asked, "Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?" 950 respondents (96.35%) selected "yes." Table 10 provides a break down by degree program or certificate awarded.

Table 10
Recommending SPC program to others by degree of certificate awarded

Would you recommend your program at SPC to others?	BS/BAS	AA	AS/AAS	CT/ATD/ PSAV/PSVC	TOTAL
Yes	96.80%	97.32%	96.76%	91.06%	96.35%
No	3.20%	2.68%	3.24%	8.94%	3.65%
Total Responses	125	522	216	123	986

The 2009-10 Recent Alumni survey administration process included survey questions to assess the graduates' level of satisfaction in areas of general education outcomes. Graduates were asked to rate their preparation of general education skill areas on a 5-point Likert scale with labels from "1-Poor" to "5-Excellent."

Based on the results, graduates felt SPC prepared them in the majority of their general education skills areas as shown in Table 11. Of the 25 outcome areas, 19 outcomes received mean scores of 4.2 or higher, one received a mean score of 4.1, one received a mean score of 4.0, and four received means of 3.9.

Table 11
College Preparation Ratings for Recent Graduates

General Education Outcomes (Five point rating scale with five being the highest)	Item Ratings		
	N	Mean	SD
<i>Communicating clearly and effectively with others through:</i>			
Speaking	1222	4.1	0.79
Listening	1220	4.3	0.72
Reading	1219	4.3	0.79
Writing	1220	4.2	0.78

<i>General Education Outcomes</i>	<i>Item Ratings</i>		
<i>(Five point rating scale with five being the highest)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Your use of mathematical and computational skills:</i>			
Comfortable with mathematical calculations	1224	3.9	0.91
Using computational skills appropriately	1224	4.0	0.87
Accurately interpreting mathematical data	1222	3.9	0.89
<i>Using the following forms of technology:</i>			
Email	1221	4.6	0.66
Word Processing	1220	4.5	0.76
Spreadsheets	1220	3.9	1.03
Databases	1216	3.9	0.99
Internet Research	1218	4.5	0.77
<i>Thinking logically and critically to solve problems:</i>			
Gathering and assessing relevant information	1222	4.3	0.73
Inquiring about and interpreting information	1222	4.3	0.75
Organizing and evaluating information	1221	4.3	0.74
Analyzing and explaining information to others	1220	4.2	0.76
Using information to solve problems	1221	4.3	0.74
<i>Working effectively with others in a variety of settings:</i>			
Participating as a team player (e.g., group projects)	1220	4.3	0.79
Working well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	1221	4.4	0.71
Using ethical courses of action	1221	4.5	0.68
Demonstrating leadership skills	1220	4.3	0.82
<i>Appreciating the importance of lifelong learning:</i>			
Showing an interest in career development	1219	4.5	0.69
Being open to new ideas and challenges	1221	4.5	0.70
Willingness to take on new responsibilities	1218	4.5	0.68
Pursuing additional educational opportunities	1219	4.5	0.71

Conclusion

Results from the 2009-10 Recent Alumni Survey (2009-10 SPC Graduates) indicated that over seventy-five percent (75.86%) of the graduates who responded are currently in the labor market. Over half of those (59.51%) are employed in a field related to their studies. The BS/BAS and AS/AAS programs reported the highest rate of related employment (82.16% and 81.25% respectively).

Wage earnings varied by degree or certificate awarded, but remained in line with the results from the 2008-09 Recent Alumni Survey, with 26.39% of respondents reporting

wages between \$21,000 and \$30,999 (down from 27.1% in 2008-09) and 24.25% reporting wages of \$52,000 or more (up from 23.8% in 2008-09). The highest wages were reported most often among BS/BAS and Certificate respondents, at 48.37% (up from 47.8%) and 29.46% (down from 32.0%) respectively. However, AA degree respondents reported the highest rate of continued education (86.26%), and 65.73% of those were enrolled full-time. As a whole, nearly two-thirds of SPC graduates are pursuing further education (64.87%).

SPC graduates also reported high levels of satisfaction in the areas of general education outcomes associated with the general education skills. Recent alumni (97.14%) reported SPC had prepared them adequately for continued education, and the majority of respondents (96.35%) would recommend their program to others.